1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

121 128 If I were to investigate and report on the Bella Coola at the present time, I would undoubtedly be influenced by many years of contact with American anthropologists and their work. I would assume a greater knowledge of North-West coast institutions, less interest in the details of ceremonial rites, and it would be impossible not to avoid comparisons with, and observations upon, the theoretical implications of many of the facts recorded. But though every field investigator is strictly objective as to the facts he collects, yet his interests, and his method of presenting them, are coloured by his background; in my case, by the older school of English anthropology. On the whole, I think this is fortunate. It means that the Bella Coola are portrayed as I saw them when I came fresh to a new field, practically uninfluenced by problems of North-West coast culture, and fully prepared to throw myself into their life. They were "my people," not a group in which I was interested because they had, or had not, certain culture traits with which I was concerned. In the course of my teaching experience, furthermore, I have wished repeatedly to give serious students detailed field monographs in which are recorded the interwoven social, religious, and folk-lore concepts of a people, the sum-total of their mental life, collected by one man at one time. This I have tried to do for the Bella Coola.

123 Following the English tradition, I wish to record how this material was collected. Before leaving for British Columbia, [115] I was advised by the late H. I. Smith, who had worked in the area, to talk to Joshua Moody (see Plate 2), an elderly Bella Coola Indian with whom Smith had worked. On explaining to Joshua that I had come to record in permanent form the traditions and lore of *his* people, Joshua grinned broadly and promised his help. Unfortunately, he spoke only a few words of English. I tried interpreter after interpreter, Indian and white, with only fair success, and my difficulties increased with the [464] opening of the canning season and the consequent employment of the younger men and women. I was urged to learn the [122] Chinook jargon, which serves widely as a *lingua franca* on the [198]

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

coast, and began the study with much misgiving. The results were surprisingly satisfactory.

After a few weeks I found that I had sufficient knowledge of Chinook to dispense with interpreters and deal directly with the older people, a tremendous advantage. Pride of ancestry is one of the strongest characteristics of the Bella Coola, and once convinced of my sincere interest in and respect for their history, they were willing to talk. They resent the condescension with which most white men regard them, so that contact with one who was friendly and sympathetic came as a pleasant surprise. There were, of course, difficulties. The canning season had begun and every able-bodied man was working away from the village. The conviction of each person that he was the best source of information, and that conferences with another were useless or unreliable, caused distrust. The desire of each informant to discuss only what interested him; the complexity of Bella Coola life itself; the necessity of checking every statement, and the extreme difficulty of doing so on account of discrepancies in the myths of different families; the fear, almost groundless, of each individual that someone else had infringed on his rights by recounting some legend; and, not least, the need for tact, patience, and a sense of humour under all conditions, were some of the obstacles to be surmounted. Nor was Chinook entirely satisfactory. It has enough words for matters pertaining to fishing, hunting, and trading, but for the realms of sociology or theology it is inadequate. This difficulty could not have been overcome without the patient help of my informants. Animated by the desire to help, they used every expedient in the way of parallel and synonym to explain obscure terms. Sometimes a younger man was called in for some abstruse meaning; more often it gradually became clear from different applications. Once the significance of a word was definitely understood, I made a note of it and used it henceforth. A useful vocabulary was thus built up, and conversations were carried on in mixed Bella Coola and Chinook, eked out by whatever English words were known by the person with

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

whom I was working. Before I left, this medley contained so much Bella Coola that it was unintelligible to white people who knew Chinook alone.

Activities in the canneries would have interfered seriously with my work during the summer of 1922 if two men had not been confined to the village, Captain Schooner owing to an injured wrist, and Jim Pollard by the illness of his wife. These two men were willing to work half a day apiece without jealousy. Each was intensely proud of the traditions of his people and, realizing that their culture was passing away, was glad to assist in making it permanent in writing. An intimacy sprang up between Captain Schooner (see Plate 3) and myself culminating in my adoption, a circumstance which established and improved my position in the community. In this way I was enabled to collect a large amount of material before July when it was necessary for me to leave for the east.

In September, 1923, when I returned to Bella Coola, I found that Captain Schooner had died a few months before, respected alike by white men and Indians. With the aid of others with whom I had made contact it was possible to obtain much new information, as well as to clear up many obscure points. The previous summer I had been so overwhelmed with material that I had no time to collate it in the field and the gaps only became apparent after a year's study. The men were so busy hunting and laying in stocks of fire-wood, however, that I found it difficult to arrange regular hours of work, but this was a trifle compared with the initial difficulties of my first trip. In October, when the Bella Coola began to prepare for the winter dances, they had to appoint a successor to Captain Schooner, who had played a leading part in their production. Having been adopted by him, it was suggested that I take his place, a proposition which I readily accepted. This admitted me to the ranks of the old men, and I imagine that my interest encouraged them to hold more ceremonials than they had done for several years. In former times, a number of the older men used to devote much time and thought to the composing, re-

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

membering, and rendering of songs; in 1923 it was found that Jim Pollard (see Plate 4) alone had a sufficiently accurate memory to act as announcer. As more and more men wished to perform, he found himself unable to keep the texts in order, and asked me to join the choir as prompter. I held this position for the rest of the winter, taking a full part in every ceremony. Although the old customs had broken down enormously, this actual participation enabled me to understand the winter dances in a manner impossible from mere description. Later on, phonographic records were made of many of the songs used, thus preserving specimens of the fast disappearing music.

My intimate association with the Bella Coola enabled me to collect the material here presented which, having been verified and reverified, I have every reason to believe is correct. Nevertheless, it has one serious defect owing to the lack of acuteness of my ear. I found it almost impossible to differentiate certain sounds; in fact, I sometimes recorded the same word with different spellings. Consequently, I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the native terms used in this monograph. Moreover, I was entirely unable to analyze proper names, which would have been of great value in understanding the attributes of supernatural beings.

When writing up field notes, the realization of my own inefficiency in the recording of sounds tempted me to rely upon the spelling of Boas whenever possible. After considerable hesitation, I rejected this course for the following reason. Ethnological work falls into two categories, descriptive and comparative. This monograph is of the former type, based on actual work in the field and the inclusion of any material from another source would destroy its originality. I believe that a descriptive work should consist exclusively of the author's own research, and I have adhered to this principle in spite of the advantages which would have followed the use of Boas' linguistic terms. For the same reason no attempt has been made to compare the customs and beliefs of the Bella Coola with those of other tribes, although this would undoubtedly have shed

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

Island chief was felt by the Bella Coola to be quite natural; one of their own chiefs might have resented the insult in the same manner. This account may have no historical basis, but it is a clear example of Bella Coola sentiment.

Further examples may help to clarify this point. A few years ago a number of Kwakiutl Indians visited Bella Coola to perform a mourning ceremony in honour of a deceased Bella Coola who had a Kwakiutl name from his grandfather, a member of that tribe. All the natives were invited to a large house, where the visitors gave a dance according to their own ancestral myths; the songs which were used recounted the history of the Kwakiutl name of the dead man. After thus displaying their prerogatives, they felt themselves obliged, and proud, as hosts, to give presents as validation. The sum of $546 was distributed among the guests. Realizing that it would be impossible to return such a sum by holding ceremonials in Fort Rupert, the home of the Kwakiutl, the leading Bella Coola decided to return the compliment immediately. The amount to be given was discussed at great length. Appreciating the courtesy of the foreigners in thus coming to pay honour to the deceased, it was not wished to insult them by giving a larger present, which would have had the effect of intimating that the recipients considered the $546 a trifling amount. Accordingly it was finally agreed to give the visitors about $300, which was done as validation of a Bella Coola ceremony at which the strangers were present. Thus the hosts allowed themselves to be shamed as a mark of courtesy. Not to be outdone in politeness, the Kwakiutl chief made a speech, expressing his willingness to allow the Bella Coola to drive him (this occurred in the days of horses and carts) to the wharf to take the steamer. In other words, he allowed the Bella Coola to put him in their debt, as they had allowed him and his party to do with respect to the distribution of money. The visit terminated with friendly relations maintained on both sides.

The need of validating every ceremonial act by presents can be further illustrated by the following instance. When

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

the writer was in Bella Coola, a non-ceremonial entertainment was given one evening at which several men sang and performed. The writer was asked to sing a Bella Coola song, which he did in the belief that it was not one that was incorporated in the ancestral myth of anyone. Unfortunately, his teacher had erred, and as soon as the song was completed an old woman arose and stated that it belonged to her ancestral family. She avoided the difficulty of its singing by immediately announcing that the singer was her "son." Thus the writer was adopted into a Bella Coola family, a circumstance which aided him considerably in collecting information. This did not alter the fact that a ceremonial song had been sung. Accordingly, the woman gave presents to the guests, thereby legalizing the adoption, and saving herself from the disgrace of having one of her songs used as if it were a matter of no consequence, free to anyone.

SEATING

Presents are also a means of obtaining seats. Every Bella Coola has at least one name embodied in an ancient myth. A man who wishes to become a chief can do so only by giving lavish presents to make his designation "strong," "firm," or "bright," to use Bella Coola expressions. Such gifts increase the importance of the owner's name, and they obtain for him the right to a seat, more or less definitely located, in the house. Since all Bella Coola habitations are built on similar lines, a man can occupy his wonted position when summoned to a ceremony in any house. The validating of ancestral names and the acquisition of seats are among the important features which occur at potlatches.

In the beginning of time, when the first people were sent down to populate the earth, it is assumed that each who established a village, consisting of a single house, seated himself in the best spot within the dwelling, namely the central position behind the fire; his younger relatives ranged either beside him

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

556 769 a man and assuage his sorrow to know that he has shown fitting respect to the dead, there is also a gain in social prestige. As the whole community respects, admires, and sometimes envies a man for having carried out a memorial potlatch, there is no doubt that he is pleased and gratified to such an extent that his grief is dulled. These two factors must constantly be kept in mind; memorial potlatches serve to commemorate the dead, but in so doing they add to the social importance of the donors. The two combine to bring considerable comfort to the chief who has lost a dear relative. In some cases the social prestige is the real motive, the grief assumed and unimportant; but in others the latter is the only factor that matters, and a chief is entirely oblivious to any increase in his own status. In most memorial potlatches, both feelings are present in the mind of the donor, and both are gratified.

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF A FUNERAL

764 114 In the preceding pages, an attempt has been made to describe the traditional death rites of the Bella Coola. The following section comprises a detailed account of funeral ceremonies witnessed in 1922. The contrast between these and the ones already recorded, will indicate some of the changes [178] in custom which are of such importance in studies of cultural [182] growth or decline. The following description will also serve [57] to demonstrate a point repeatedly mentioned, the manner in which business transactions and arrangements of all kinds take place whenever the people have been called together.

[123] On June 27, 1922, the death occurred in Bella Coola of Jessie, Mrs. Samuel King, daughter of Captain Schooner. The latter, now deceased, was one of the writer's most trusted friends, and as a result of this friendship it was possible not only to attend the actual rites, but to ascertain much of the feeling underlying them. This advantage had its drawbacks, since it was manifestly impossible to question either the father or the husband of the woman too closely. The details will be de-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

977 * 787 823 The last appearance of such a stone was in Dean Channel, to the father of an elderly Bella Coola, who was too amazed to take advantage of it. As far as could be ascertained, in 1922 there was only one stone which was regarded by the owner as having brought him good fortune. It had been obtained by one of his elderly relatives who died about 1906. This man had been walking beside the Bella Coola River one spring day when he happened to notice a woodpecker perched on one of the posts supporting an olachen net. Without taking his eyes from it, he idly stooped down and threw a pebble at the bird which flew to the bank, lit on a pile of stones, and became one of them. Realizing that here might be the means of obtaining supernatural good fortune, if properly handled, the man watched for some time, then went forward, picked up the stone, covered it with evergreen boughs and wrapped the whole in a strip torn from the white-man's shirt he was wearing. With the axe he was carrying he cut a recess in a tree, put the object in it and covered the hiding place with the original bark. He said nothing about it, but the stone brought him such good luck that he obtained large quantities of everything desirable.

977 823 In later years the man, after replacing the stone in the hole of the tree, went away to Victoria; when he returned, years later, it was still there. By placing it in his box he again prospered in all his ventures. When an old man the owner presented the stone to a relative who still treasures it. It is red, about a foot in length, shaped somewhat like a human figure without arms or legs, but with a prominent navel opening. See Fig. 1. The owner has kept it for years, hiding it even from his wife and allowing no white man to see it. He had been perfectly willing to have photographs taken of most of his ceremonial objects, but declined to permit this to be done with his valued stone, and carefully hid it in a box after showing it. When he wished to use the transformed bird, it was wrapped in his old shirt, together with a small amount of money or what-

[23]

Fig. 1
Lucky Stone

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

men had vanished. It is possible that in this particular case there was a belief that *Alquntâm* granted the wish when convinced that all had the same desire, but this element is often entirely lacking.

Belief in the power of thought is a concept which the investigator constantly meets in Bella Coola at the present day. For example, in 1921 a government official working in the valley, purchased a representation of a merganser which had been used in a ceremonial.[1] Although this should have been destroyed after use, no difficulty would have been raised if the transaction had remained a secret. Unfortunately, the buyer allowed the object to be seen by several Bella Coola and by some Carriers. This caused indignation throughout the community and news of it reached the Bella Bella, who concluded that the vendor would suffer disaster for allowing a secret object to be seen by the despised Indians of the interior. Within a year, his wife died. The Bella Bella believed that his sin had brought its own punishment, but the Bella Coola, who knew the details of the sale and did not consider the exposure of the article to have been the fault of the seller, attributed it to the power of the thoughts of the Bella Bella. They all expected that he would be punished; therefore he was punished; the expectation was sufficient to effect its own fulfilment. This incident was too fresh in the minds of several men to allow them to sell ceremonial objects to the writer.

The most common form taken by this conviction is with regard to death; if it is believed that a man will die, he is almost certain to do so. In June, 1922, a woman died in Bella Coola and her father claimed that she had been murdered by a certain man either with material poison or by magical means. He took no direct steps in revenge but stated emphatically that the man whom he suspected would die within a year. The threatened man knew of this, and more than once said that he

[1] The article, now in the National Museum of Canada, consists of a cloth and wood representation of a merganser canoe such as was used by *Nusalis* in the beginning of time.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

575 not considered necessary. With few exceptions, hereafter to be noted, *kusiut* masks are burnt at the conclusion of each ceremony, a practice which probably originated in order to avoid the possibility of their being seen by the uninitiated. [171] The Bella Coola state that this is one of the most striking differences between their rites and those of the Bella Bella.

575 Next in importance to masks are whistles (see Plate 2). The large, cone-shaped form used in *suaok* ceremonial is replaced in *kusiut* dances by a smaller type consisting of portions of wood glued together, which can be blown with ease from beneath a concealing blanket. Another type has bellows consisting of a mountain goat bladder, which is held beneath the arm-pit so that it can be worked invisibly. During the summer the whistles are kept by one individual, usually a marshal. Specific information concerning the ownership of these whistles could not be obtained; it appears that any *kusiut* can make one, or have one made for him by a skilled carpenter, and that their retention by one person during the summer is merely for convenience. They are freely lent to anyone for use in a ceremony.

575 In some dances special objects are used in connection with dramatic performances, such as bull-roarers, wooden representations of animals, birds, or miniature human beings. One old man described a pipe formerly used at *Tăl-io*, which had a carved bowl as large as a tea-cup with three radiating stems. It was carved from a knotty excrescence on a beech bole. Little could be learnt of its history, except that it was supposed to have been carved by a chief with the design of his patron and displayed through pride.

575 The usual guests at a performance of the type just summarized are the dancer's fellow-villagers and any strangers who happen to be present in the town. Great as is the desire of the *kuksiut* to impress their uninitiated tribesmen, they are still more eager to impress strangers, hence the presence of Carriers adds piquancy to the rites. The writer believes that his presence and interest encouraged the Bella Coola to

[see category 116, p84(B) ANALYCT]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

perform several ancient rites through a desire to "show off" before someone who was ignorant. In recent years there has been a tendency to concentrate on *kusiut* ceremonials, and to judge a man's worth by his lavishness in them, but this is only a modern development due to the prohibition of the potlatch. Nevertheless, even in former times some individuals preferred to invite foreign guests to *kusiut* dances and to give them valuable gifts rather than to save these for potlatches; such a ceremony is called a *kukusiutsk*. Whenever strangers are present at a *kusiut* dance they receive small pieces of dyed cedar-bark as proof of the friendly intentions of the host. The general consensus of Bella Coola opinion is that it is foolish for a man to concentrate on *kusiut* performances, particularly if he impoverish himself to the detriment of potlatches.

Although foreign guests are seldom invited to *kusiut* rites, a dancer frequently calls in his fellows from adjacent villages. But as the ceremonial season is simultaneous in the different settlements, with almost nightly performances, it is often impossible to avoid conflict in dates. Which invitation shall have preference is decided in the following manner:

During the days of *qathm* and *nukuxam* the dancer sends a herald of powerful physique to invite guests from as many villages as he wishes. Simultaneously, a messenger may be approaching from the opposite direction with a similar invitation. Each envoy watches carefully around each bend in the path for his rival, and whichever can first call out his message is entitled to continue to give his invitation in the village of the outwitted herald. It is considered exceedingly bad taste to decline a summons, so the ceremony to which the defeated herald was bearing an invitation must be postponed. Sometimes the two messengers sight one another simultaneously, and the relative priority of their messages is then decided by a contest of strength. The rivals stand in the path, shoulder to shoulder, arms close to their sides, and shove with all their strength, the winner being the one who can force his opponent to move his feet. This last means of deciding is used exclu-

type of rivalry can be carried out only during the ceremonial season.

After killing and eating a human being, a Cannibal must conceal himself for a considerable period, sometimes as long as four years. The uninitiated are told that the great power within him has taken him so far into the upper regions that one or more years must elapse before his return. During this time he can be seen only by *Initiates*. The writer was told of one unfortunate corpse-eating Cannibal, *Lithaler*, who was virtually secluded for eight years, since a stone was cast at his face every time he reappeared, thus forcing him to kill and eat. This curse had been dormant for a number of years until conferred on the writer, who failed to uphold the prerogative.

One other type of Cannibal prerogative remains to be described, namely, that of biting oneself. This is even less common than that of corpse-eating, being enjoyed only by two individuals, *Bellanlaxay of Hagai* and *Snoog* of the Kimsquit River. The following account of the origin of the latter's prerogative was obtained:

Many years ago, soon after the first people came to the world, the crowd of the *Initiate Dances* was much more amazing than it is at present. At that time the inhabitants of the earth were still endowed with such semi-supernatural powers that they were able to perform rites that people of the present day can appreciate only with the aid of competent witnesses. There was then living in one of the villages on the Kimsquit River a certain *Snoog* who had the prerogative of biting himself. He once went hunting on one of the mountains, and when he failed to secure the people were convinced that he had eaten an heavenly of his own flesh that he had died. Although search was made for his body, it was not until the following year that a professional hunter found the skeleton. From the position of the bones it was judged that their confusion was corrupt: he had killed himself by eating too much of his own flesh. The chiefs and other influential *Initiates* held a meeting at which it was decided that henceforth *Initiate Dances* would only be given, not carried out in reality. The following winter the name and prerogative were transmitted to the son of the dead man, who bit himself, but not sufficiently deeply to cause serious injury.

[illegible]

[The Fingus Dance]

on [illegible]

"I want a strong man. I want an Indian," naming a [illegible] of powerful physique.

The man so designated comes forward, passes once, sometimes, around the cord, seizes it with both hands, and strains to pull up the fingus. Sometimes he fails to make it appear at all, so he may be able to produce the upper part of the forehead, and he soon returns to his place, baffled. The unanimous verdict then is that it is a mere fingus, and the parade is done. How it can lift it so easily when another fails. The explanation lies in the long rope, of which they are unaware, passing down through the floor of the house to the space between it and the ground. There are concealed four strong *Indians* whose duty is to hold the end and when it is to be hauled up to a distance indicated by whispered instructions. It would be a major disaster should they become restless or should the rope break. A second *Indian* is called forward, but has no greater success than his predecessor, and a third and a fourth also fail. The heralds keep up a running fire of comments, for instance, if one man is able to raise the forehead one step they remark on the fact, saying that he must be a good man to whom the supernatural beings are favourably disposed. If, on the other hand, the cord is drawn down, removing the skin from the palms of the would-be pullers, they comment unanimously on the [illegible] manifestly unworthy him. When four *Indians* have tried and failed, X again demonstrates his strength, or the willingness of the supernatural beings to respond to his pulling, by lifting the fingus and dangling body into view. Once more a herald calls out:

"The *Indians* were unaware to pull."

The challenge is now open to anyone, member of the society or uninitiated, and one after another comes forward, circles the rope, and tries his strength—but without avail. Even the two of the *Indians* dance half unseen recruits the mirth of the spectators when the rope is quickly pulled below, a painful experience as the writer knows to his cost. Often it is a little girl

[The Dance of Thunder]

[illegible] THE BELLA COOLA INDIANS

with clean, winning ways. It proceeds to pull forth its wings and rushes at one of the spectators, poking the weapon at him and humming fiercely. The writer took the part of a supernatural mosquito on one of the dances held in the winter of 1922-3 and remembers the expression of fear on the face of a younger member of the audience when about to be "stung." The victim was certainly afraid on that occasion, and if that feeling could survive the break-down of belief, it is not to be wondered at that fear was universal in the days when the Bellacoolas were thought to be possessors of supernatural powers. Another being who often appears at a dance of Thunder is Tsetsaxoos Dripping-from-the-Roof. The medical figure walks slowly around the fire and Tsetsaxoos explains that he is the water which drips from a hole in the plastering. The Clowns are never omitted, and always cause amusement amid the gravity of the rite. One after another, the supernatural beings appear from the enclosure, circle the fire, and withdraw, accompanied by the ugly remarks of Tsetsaxoos. Finally there is a long pause, broken when a medical figure slowly enters forth. It is Snail, who entered at the same time as the other supernatural beings but arrived on his own private errand. Snail circles the fire and disappears. At this point the uninitiated are expelled and the rite concludes as usual.

Dances whose powers are Thunder, Earthquake, Sun, or Moon do not confine their dances to the ceremonial season, but perform whenever a manifestation of their powers occurs. If Thunder is heard, no matter what the time of day or season of year, X stands up and cries out:

"It [he does not refer to Thunder by name] is dancing on lonely up sloh. Ewe ..."

The call of ewe ... is thought to have a quieting effect on Thunder. Any Bellacoolas present at once dress, then, accompanied by a number of his associates, X proceeds to the lower house of the village where the same ritual is repeated. This is done in every dwelling, after which X returns home and

When all hope has been abandoned, they are summoned and the relatives complete the ceremony, doing only that part of it left undone by the original designer of the cult. The principle is the same as that described when a novice dies, that someone must finish the rite. This aspect of the burial ceremonial is still preserved consciously as the writer found to be true. It was proposed that he be formally entombed into the enclosure, but this was not allowed on the ground that he would not be present the following winter to complete the rites necessitated by the coming of the cult.

The Final Rite

The commencement of the burial season is regulated by the coming of Nuthlyum, but its conclusion is a matter of arrangement. By February the number of deceased waiting to dance has become negligible and the members decide to terminate the ceremonial season. It must be remembered that an enclosure has been built in every house where an interment during dance has taken place, and that as long as there are in existence the unentombed have not been allowed to live in these houses. The social life of the community has accordingly been profoundly disturbed. Of course several dances may have taken place in a single dwelling, but even allowing for that, the fact remains that the unentombed have been forced to dwell temporarily in perhaps only one or two houses. The most obvious mark of the end of the ceremonial season is the destruction of these enclosures.

A few nights after the last entombment, the herald summons the *kakwiai* to the house in which it will take place. They sit down but the usual drowsing is omitted. Presently sticks are distributed and one of the singers takes his place to lead in the customary frenzied hooting. But before he raises his hoot, one of the members, or another *kakwiai* with ability in that respect, runs to the centre of the house and spits noisily in all directions, his aim being to deluge the house and spectators with a spray of saliva. Then the singer leads the hooting of

8: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

figures are really beings from another world. The explanation lies in the profound belief of all Bella Coola in the near presence of the supernatural; consequently, a supernatural explanation is the one normally given for all unusual incidents. The dances themselves are filled with strange manifestations, particularly the weird whistling concerning the origin of which the uninitiated have no idea. Once convinced by this means of the presence of unknown powers, it is easy for them to believe that the masked figures are visitors from the other world. Nor was their belief in former days shaken by certain representations which were palpably false, such as that of the sun. No one could believe that the disk which moved across the back of the house was the sun itself, but on the other hand it seemed marvellous to the uninitiated, ignorant of the means used to portray it. To the white man there seems a fundamental difference between a supernatural being and the representation of a strange object made to move by unseen means, but to the Bella Coola both belong to another realm, and are accordingly akin. Moreover, there were occasions when the uninitiated must have seen the shifting or actual falling of a mask, for example, during the fight with wasps. But here again the deep belief of the non-members came to the help of the *dukwiat*, who told their guests that this was caused by the coming of a call to the actor, and what might easily have become doubt and suspicion was thus changed to respect.

The writer laboured under two tremendous difficulties in collecting information about *dukwiat* matters; the present dances are mere shadows of what they formerly were, and there are no more uninitiated. His presence and quest for information served to stimulate interest and led to a partial revival of the old rites, but the bulk of his material was obtained from informants rather than from actual observation. It is a universal characteristic of mankind to idealize accounts of former practices, so it is not only possible, but probable, that the foregoing descriptions are more perfect than many of the rites to which

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

the *kwikun*, *prompter*, is equally important, though less obvious. As many as one hundred songs may be in constant use in the course of a single *hamat* season, and it is impossible for any one individual to remember them sufficiently well never to become confused when calling them out. Consequently, one or more prompters sit beside the announcer, ready to whisper to him the words of the next subdivision. Prompters are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the myths of all performers and, since they neither announce nor sing, they are able to concentrate their whole attention on remembering the words which have been considered suitable. 533* 796* 575*

This somewhat complicated mechanism ensures a minimum of error in all important cases. Mistakes do creep in, however, and it is related with glee how on one occasion the singers completely forgot a text and substituted a description of a mask used at the rite in question. Moreover, even the solemnity of a *hamat* dance cannot entirely check the love of the Bella Coola for practical joking. A blind singer once laid down his stick for a moment, whereupon one of his companions kicked it away. It appears to be virtually impossible for a man to sing unless he can accompany himself by rapping, and the frantic efforts of the sightless one to recover his baton almost betrayed his companions into obvious mirth. Occasionally, too, a prompter neglects his task[a] and the announcer is forced to improvise, while the leader endeavours to conceal the error by lengthening the pause between subdivisions. 538* 796* 575* 522

Marriage songs, shaman songs, non-ceremonial songs, and a few others of special type are sung by an individual, unaccompanied. The technique is, therefore, quite different from that just described. Dance songs of all kinds should, if complete, have the three parts; these are indicated as *A*, *B*, and *C* 533*

[a] During the winter of 1922-4 there was only one man in Bella Coola with sufficient skill and poise to act as announcer and prompter. He found it impossible to perform both duties and requested the aid of the writer as prompter. The texts were written down, and it was the writer's duty to sit beside the announcer, waiting for a nudge signifying that he had forgotten the next subdivision. From personal experience the writer can state that the task of prompter is worrying to the extreme. [123]

J: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

grave difficulties in explaining their customs, as the white man has in understanding them.

The writer was impressed by the brilliance shown by several of the natives. Joshua Moody, for example, is essentially the philosopher. More individualistic than most of his tribesmen, he was one of the first to adopt Christianity and has been a faithful follower of the new creed. Deeply interested in religious questions, he has stored up what has been told him of the Bible and pondered deeply on all problems of life. Not particularly practical, subject to fits of anger or moroseness, but with a meditative temperament which delights in seeking biblical parallels and synonyms for Bella Coola practices, his is the kind of mind which, in other walks of life, would have produced the professor of philosophy. Jim Pollard is quite another type. Essentially practical, he has devoted his energies to keeping abreast of changing conditions. He is the best singer and composer in Bella Coola, the best canoeman for miles; he has learnt to handle a motor-boat engine, to aid prospectors for minerals, and has succeeded in amassing and saving a considerable amount of money. Jim excelled all other informants in clearness and logical presentation of his explanations, though he showed a slight tendency, intelligible enough, to gloss over aspects which he knew would be considered unpleasant. If Jim had been a white man, he would undoubtedly have made his mark in the world of business. The late Captain Schooner differed from either of the preceding. Older than they, and unconverted, he, perhaps, came nearest to the original, uncontaminated Bella Coola type. Heavy in build, coarse in humour and expression, he had a heart of gold and was a fine example of a native gentleman. He was glad to assist most patiently in recording ancient lore, being intensely proud of the traditions of his ancestors. A friendship developed from this which is one of the writer's happiest memories. Often in the evenings life in general was discussed, the war, the rush of progress in big cities, the quest for wealth, the spread of white civilization, and the problems raised by the contact of peoples.

Z:McIlwraith E-5 [1922-1924] 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

APPENDIX 9

STRING FIGURES

THE only form of pastime which it was practised to investigate in any detail was the construction of string figures. These seem to have no ceremonial or religious significance; they are made for recreation only, and it was found easy to have a number while passing the day for other kinds of research. In fact, interest in them was one of the ways in which the writer became friends with a number of Bella Coola. As is to be expected, some individuals are more proficient in constructing complicated string figures than others, the old women being particularly adept. During the long delays which occur in all the dances it is a common sight to see an old crone teaching a group of young girls the figures which she herself knew when young. Some men remember a number from childhood, but the making of designs with string is regarded as more fitting for girls and women. Songs accompany many of the figures, and the singing of these is considered an essential part of the construction. It was noted that many more figures were known long ago; in fact, several of those here recorded were only obtained after repeated efforts on the part of an old woman to reconstruct those which she had been shown when a child. No attempt was made to obtain all the Bella Coola figures, a longer number could doubtless have been collected, but those here described are the ones most commonly made.

The nomenclature used is that described by Miss Shelton,[1] in toto following the method used by Rivers and Shelton. It will be assumed that the reader is familiar with this, including the meaning of the terms, 'Opening A,' 'Position I,' and 'Dorsalis.' A string about two feet long will be found most convenient for making the Bella Coola figures.

1. A SALMON-TRAP

Double the loop; two strands now take the place of the usual one, but these will be referred to as a single string or loop. The figure can be made equally well with a string one-half the usual length.

Place string as a simple loop over left thumb and index finger and the right hand.

With right index finger hook down the string passing directly across left thumb and index finger and draw out to right, allowing right hand loop to slip over this hooked-down string.

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1. A. Shelton, Cat's Cradle from Many Lands (London, 1913).